

division of municipal development



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Massachusetts Downtown Initiative *Fact Sheet*

DHCD's Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) offers a range of services and assistance to communities seeking help on how to revitalize their downtowns. The primary mission of the MDI is to make downtown revitalization an integral part of community development in cities and towns across the Commonwealth. MDI's guiding principle is that the most effective approach to downtown revitalization is a holistic one; one which addresses economic and community development needs, and provides a framework of interrelated activities which promote positive, desirable change in a downtown to keep it healthy and prosperous.

Successful downtown revitalization is comprehensive and includes a well-balanced community strategy composed of seven downtown building blocks:

- Encouraging Community Involvement & Ownership
- Preserving & Enhancing Downtown Character
- Ensuring Economic Vitality
- Promoting Downtown Assets
- Getting Into & Around Downtown
- Living Downtown
- Keeping Downtown Safe

How it works

Communities should contact the Division of Municipal Development to access the technical assistance components of the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative. Currently, MDI provides assistance through the following components:

"Desktop" Technical Assistance

Ongoing technical assistance on downtown-related issues is provided by staff via telephone, fax and sent materials, based on written and telephone requests from communities, as well as referrals from division staff. Recent requests have included: how to develop a business recruitment program geared towards minorities; how to assess the impact of affordable housing on downtown revitalization efforts; and how to develop downtown organizational bylaws

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TA Site Visit Program

The Downtown Technical Assistance Site Visit Program provides assistance to communities targeting a specific issue related to the community's downtown revitalization effort. The type of assistance needed is determined through an initial site visit by DHCD staff and a decision is made as to the type of follow-up assistance is needed. The goal of this technical assistance is to address an issue that will facilitate the community's ability to go forward with their revitalization effort.

Downtown Resources

MDI produces *Downtown Resources*, a publication listing over 100 different sources of financial and technical assistance relevant to downtown revitalization. It is updated periodically.

Website

Information on downtown revitalization is available on MDI's website:
www.state.ma.us/dhcd/components/dcs/downtown.

Education and Training

MDI is charged with the development of downtown education and training opportunities that meet the needs of communities in various stages of downtown development. A series of workshops will be held in 2003. These workshops will deal with economic development, design issues, creating a business improvement district, and organizational issues.

For More Information

Please contact DHCD's Division of Municipal Development at (617) 727-7001.